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WEST GERMAN ELECTION, 1961

by

F. Yorick Blumenfeld

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RICHARD M. BOECKEL, *Editor*

BUEL W. PATCH, *Associate Editor*

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WEST GERMAN ELECTION, 1961

COMMUNIST ACTION to seal the sector borders between West and East Berlin, interfering with the freedom of movement guaranteed by four-power agreements on the status of the city, has sharply intensified the long gathering Berlin crisis. It may also have had decisive effect on the outcome of the national elections to be held in West Germany on Sept. 17. In that contest Mayor Willy Brandt of West Berlin is challenging the bid of venerable Konrad Adenauer to continue in the post of Chancellor of the Federal Republic—an office which Adenauer has already held for 12 years.

Reactions of the two men to the new turn of events in Berlin have differed somewhat. Both have voiced strong opposition to the Communist moves, but while Adenauer has gone along with the firm but cautious protests of the Big Three Western powers, Brandt has warned against a passive attitude and called for "convincing non-military counter-measures."¹ The Bundestag, listening to both men at a special session in Bonn on Aug. 18, gave vigorous applause and seemingly equal support to each.

On the basis of age alone, it might be supposed that 47-year-old Brandt would be deemed by West German voters better able than 85-year-old Adenauer to bear the heavy burden of leading the country at such a difficult time.² However, Brandt has faced an uphill task from the outset. Now, despite admiration of his courage in front of the Russians, whatever chances he had of replacing the old Chancellor may have been hurt by the recognized risks of turning to a new man in time of crisis.

When the last West German election was held four years ago, a victory for Brandt's Social Democratic Party would have threatened the Western alliance.³ This year, on the

¹ Address in Bundestag at Bonn, Aug. 18. Brandt proposed United Nations consideration of the "flagrant violation of human rights in Berlin."

² Brandt was projected into prominence by Soviet Premier Khrushchev's original Berlin demands in November 1958. The picture of Brandt standing up to the Russians captured the imagination not only of fellow-Social Democrats but also of other West Germans.

³ See "German Election, 1957," *E.R.R.*, 1957 Vol. II, pp. 619-620.

contrary, Social Democrats as well as Chancellor Adenauer's Christian Democrats are firmly committed to West German participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Economic Community or Common Market. While the Eisenhower administration for obvious reasons backed Adenauer in 1957, the Kennedy administration has expressed no clear preference in the 1961 contest. Meanwhile, American political methods are being employed to woo the 32 million German voters expected to go to the polls next month. Representatives of West Germany's two leading political parties toured this country last autumn to study the tactics of United States presidential campaigners. Now the German parties are staging television debates and using other American techniques in seeking support for their candidates.

POSITION OF MAJOR PARTIES ON DOMESTIC ISSUES

The Social Democrats, who emphasized such issues as military disengagement, renunciation of military alliances, and German reunification in the 1957 campaign, are no longer pressing demands for radical change. Aware that they cannot win votes by proposing far-reaching economic and social reform in a time of unprecedented prosperity, the Socialists seek to create the impression that, if victorious, they would do very much what the Christian Democrats are doing—only more vigorously, realistically and responsibly.⁴

Realizing that they must broaden their appeal, the Social Democrats at a party congress in Bonn on April 28 put much more stress on social and economic issues than had the Christian Democrats at their congress in Cologne a few days earlier. The party stand on nationalization of industry was softened; coal and atomic energy were said to be the only sectors of the economy that might be nationalized if the Socialists gained power. At the time Brandt was put in the running for Chancellor last August, he said the party would "acknowledge the reconstruction achievements of the last 12 years and would seek only to make them more solid and secure."

Because of confusion in the popular mind between socialism and communism, the Social Democratic Party (known as S.P.D. from the initials of its German language design-

⁴ Fritz Rene Allemann, "Germany's Quiet Election," *New Leader*, May 1, 1961, p. 14.

nation) had formally abandoned Marxism at its Bad Godesberg congress in November 1959. All past references to the class struggle, exploitation of workers, socialization, and expropriation were dropped in a new "Program of Principles."⁵ The Bad Godesberg program stressed such slogans as "Competition as much as possible—planning only as much as necessary" and "Free economic development, free competition, and private property." Decentralized public ownership was advocated only in cases where private domination of the market worked against a "just social order." It was asserted that West Germany's already high standard of living could be raised to twice its present level within the life span of the present generation.⁶ The S.P.D. promised to equalize purchasing power by raising taxes on corporations and large individual incomes and lowering imposts on such foodstuffs as tea, coffee, salt, and sugar.

The Christian Democratic Union (C.D.U.) is running on the same platform that brought it victory in 1957: "No experiments." Consequently, the party's general position in both foreign and domestic policy is virtually unchanged. The strength of the C.D.U. rests on its proved ability to attract different political, religious, and other factions.

In domestic policy it adheres to the philosophy of a free-enterprise economy with due consideration for both private initiative and social progress—a philosophy to which the Adenauer government and many foreign observers attribute West Germany's postwar boom.⁷ The party's platform affirms that "Prosperity is a means, not an end of C.D.U. policy." That policy has made it possible for lower-income groups to acquire their own homes and to buy so-called "people's shares" in such enterprises as the Volkswagen automobile works. Shares in these and other companies are being offered to members of lower-income groups at discounts of up to 20 per cent, with an additional 5 per cent discount for parents of two or more children.⁸ The

⁵ As in the past, the Christian Democrats continue to link the S.P.D. with communism. Emphasis is placed on the fact that Alfred Frenzel, an S.P.D. deputy and member of the Defense Committee, was convicted of passing secret documents to the Communists and sentenced to 15 years of hard labor on April 28. The Socialists, on the other hand, contend that Adenauer's entourage includes too many former Nazis, like the Chancellor's secretary, Hans Globke.

⁶ Heinz Pol, "Willy Brandt," *The Nation*, Jan. 28, 1961, p. 79.

⁷ West German industrial output reached 269 per cent of the 1950 base of 100 earlier this year, but prices have remained remarkably stable.

⁸ Uwe Kitzinger, "West Germany: A Pre-Election Survey," *World Today*, March 1961, p. 115.

C.D.U. counsels both management and labor to be moderate in their demands and remains firmly opposed to additional nationalization of industry.

Chancellor Adenauer, supremely confident that his party will score another electoral success, said at the Cologne congress in April that it had taken the Socialists 11 years to discover that they had been wrong in opposing NATO, German rearmament, and the European Common Market. But Adenauer added that by finally admitting past errors and in effect adopting the present platform of the C.D.U., the Social Democrats had disqualified themselves for responsible leadership.

FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES IN THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN

The Social Democrats have clearly become a "me-too" party in the area of foreign affairs. Appearing on the American television program "Meet the Press," March 12, Brandt said that if he and his party were victorious, there would be no changes "in principle" in West German foreign policy. Both Adenauer and Brandt are firmly committed to strengthening the Western alliance. They both advocate German reunification under conditions which would assure political self-determination, and they both favor broader economic and political ties among the European states.

In a joint statement issued in Washington last April 13, Adenauer and President Kennedy voiced agreement that "intensified political cooperation in NATO" was "indispensable in order to coordinate the efforts of the Allies for the preservation of peace and security in the world." The Socialists, reversing a stand taken in previous election campaigns, also back German participation in NATO, but they dissent from the C.D.U. position that an integrated NATO striking force, armed with nuclear weapons, is needed to counter the threat of aggression. Adenauer's Minister of Defense, Franz Joseph Strauss, insists that the German army be given nuclear weapons, but the feeling among S.P.D. delegates in the Bundestag seems to be that the nuclear club is already large enough and that Germany should concentrate on strengthening conventional arms.

The C.D.U. platform of April 27 stresses general controlled disarmament and Western cooperation in aid to less-developed countries. At the April meeting Eugen Gersten-

maier, president of the Bundestag, specifically rejected all thought of Germany's once more "aspiring to become a world power." While stressing self-determination for all Germans, Gerstenmaier told the Cologne party congress that Germans want "to be able to live together honorably again with those who are determined to have freedom."

West Germany's Political Party System

POSTWAR TRANSFER of political power to the West German people was provided for by the United States, Great Britain, France and the Benelux countries in the so-called London Agreements of June 1948.⁹ Two months later, the legislatures of the German states (*Laender*) in the Western zones of occupation chose 65 delegates to a "Parliamentary Council" at Bonn that was charged with drafting a provisional constitution to be known as the "Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany."

The Basic Law, adopted by the Parliamentary Council in May 1949, provided for executive, legislative and judicial branches of government and contained a clearly defined bill of rights. The people of West Germany went to the polls on Aug. 14, 1949, to elect 402 members of the Bundestag (federal lower house). The Federal Republic came officially into existence on Sept. 21, 1949, with a simultaneous changeover from military to civilian control by the occupying powers.¹⁰

OPERATION OF WEST GERMAN ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The Federal Republic's electoral system for the Bundestag combines direct choice of candidates by majority vote with proportional representation.¹¹ Each voter casts two ballots: one for a candidate running in his district, the other for a list of candidates representing a particular party in the *Land*, or state, in which he lives. One-half of the members of the Bundestag are consequently elected di-

⁹ Russian intransigence in the quadripartite Council of Foreign Ministers in December 1947 had blocked East-West agreement on establishment of central administrative agencies for all of Germany.

¹⁰ See "German Problem," *E.R.R.*, 1950 Vol. I, pp. 301-302. Occupation of West Germany ended on May 5, 1955, when the Western powers formally recognized the full sovereignty of the Federal Republic. West Germany became a member of NATO four days later.

¹¹ The Bundesrat (upper house), which represents the state governments, has 41 members appointed by the governments of the 10 *Laender* and 4 non-voting members from West Berlin.

rectly from the 247 districts, and the other half through party lists in the 10 *Laender* of the Federal Republic.¹²

Seats in the Bundestag are assigned to parties in direct ratio to the votes they receive in the *Laender*. To be represented in the Bundestag, however, a party must either have directly elected members from at least three districts or must have polled at least 5 per cent of the total vote in the Federal Republic. Members are elected for a period of four years, but the Bundestag may be dissolved by the President of the republic under special circumstances.

The President is elected by a Federal Assembly consisting of members of the Bundestag and of an equal number of delegates elected by the legislatures of the *Laender*.¹³ The President is elected for a five-year term and is not eligible for a third consecutive term. He appoints and dismisses judges and federal officials and executes and promulgates the laws, but his duties are representative rather than executive. He proposes and, upon request of the Bundestag, dismisses the Chancellor. Theodor Heuss was elected President in September 1949, reelected in 1954, and succeeded by Heinrich Lübke in 1959.

The Chancellor, who need not be a member of the Bundestag or of any party, is elected by a majority of the Bundestag upon recommendation of the President. He may be dismissed by a vote of no confidence, but only if a majority has been obtained for a successor. This provision for a "constructive vote of no confidence" makes the German Chancellor's position more secure than that of prime ministers in most other European countries, where a simple vote of lack of confidence, or defeat on a major piece of legislation, can topple a government.¹⁴

GRAVITATION TOWARD TWO-PARTY SYSTEM SINCE 1953

A generation ago it was almost impossible for a foreign observer to distinguish among the many large and small groups then struggling for political power in Germany.

¹² See "German Election, 1957," *E.R.R.*, 1957 Vol. II, pp. 610-611. The Bundestag now has 519 members, including 22 non-voting representatives of Berlin. Because Berlin has no voting representatives, and Berliners do not vote in national elections, Brandt will head the S.P.D. ticket on the *Laender*, or proportional, list. Adenauer, on the other hand, will not only head the proportional C.D.U. list but also run as the C.D.U. candidate of his voting district in Cologne.

¹³ The *Laender* participate actively in the federal legislative process through their representation in the Bundesrat. All bills presented by the government must first be submitted to the Bundesrat, which has limited veto powers but may express its opinion on all legislation passed by the lower chamber.

¹⁴ Lemut Arnts, *Facts About Germany* (1959), pp. 41-44.

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The Germans themselves were almost as confused. Democratic parliamentarianism thus appeared to many persons to be identical with political fragmentation.¹⁵ Postwar political party development, particularly after 1949, constituted a break with German tradition. The simplification which has occurred during the past decade has brought German politics much closer to the Anglo-Saxon two-party system.

Immediately after the Nazi defeat in 1945, the Germans began to revive the numerous parties that had existed before Hitler took over. Under the Basic Law of May 8, 1949, broad principles governing political parties were laid down:

1. The parties shall participate in forming the political will of the people. They can be freely formed. Their internal organization must conform to democratic principles. They must publicly account for the sources of their funds.

2. Parties which . . . seek to impair or abolish the free and democratic basic order or to jeopardize the existence of the Federal Republic of Germany shall be unconstitutional.

More than 50 parties, most of them small, had appeared on the scene before the 1953 election. A new law accordingly was enacted in an effort to reduce the number. It required that a party, to get on the *Laender* (proportional) electoral list, must either have polled 5 per cent of the total popular vote in the last previous election or have obtained election of at least one candidate by direct popular vote.

Only five parties were represented in the second Bundestag, elected in 1953; in the third Bundestag, elected in 1957, only four parties were represented. As early as 1949,

STANDING OF PARTIES IN BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS				
	1949 Share of total vote	1953 Share of total vote	1957 Share of total vote	Seats now held
C.D.U.	31%	45%	50%	270
S.P.D.	29	29	32	169
Free Democrats	12	10	8	41
Communists	6	2	—	—
German Party	4	3	3	17
Others	18	11	7	—
				497

¹⁵ A part of the popular appeal of Hitler's national socialism lay in its appearing to be a remedy for such fragmentation, providing a monolithic party apparatus that proclaimed: *Ein Reich, ein Volk, ein Fuehrer*.

two parties outranked all others. The C.D.U. and S.P.D. together received 60 per cent of the vote that year, 74 per cent in 1953, and 82 per cent in 1957.

The C.D.U. in 1957 became the first party in the history of representative government in Germany to attract the votes of an outright majority of the electorate.¹⁶ Chancellor Adenauer was put in position to form a government with a safe parliamentary majority without the support of any other party.¹⁷

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

The Christian Democratic Union, together with its Bavarian affiliate (Christian Social Union), has been the most popular party in West Germany since the Federal Republic was founded. Led by Adenauer since the beginning, it is a middle-of-the-road party whose membership comprises a broad cross-section of the population: conservatives, liberals, advocates of states' rights and advocates of a strong central government, even trade unionists. Although the rank and file is inter-denominational, its leadership has a Catholic proclivity. The party seeks to solve social, economic, and political problems by applying to them the principles of Christianity. Formed in the post-war era, the C.D.U. has consistently stood for free enterprise and the inviolability of individual and property rights.

Germany's Social Democratic Party dates from the middle of the 19th century. Founded in 1863, when the liberalism of the German working class was violently opposed by the entrenched aristocracy but backed by the middle class and the church, the party has a radical Marxian-oriented background. However, it has traditionally been opposed to communism. During the years of the Weimar republic (1919-33) the S.P.D., although the largest party, could not form a government single-handed; but it led a succession of coalition ministries. Its strength fell from 45½ per cent of the total vote in 1919 to less than 25 per cent just before the National Socialist take-over and its own dissolution.

Drawing adherents from workers, the middle class, and

¹⁶ The party's share of the total vote was a fraction over 50 per cent.

¹⁷ When the C.D.U. led the various parties in 1949 by only a small plurality, it formed a coalition with the Free Democrats and the German Party to assure a working majority in the Bundestag.

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left-wing intellectuals, the S.P.D. was reactivated on June 17, 1945, under the leadership of Kurt Schumacher, who was succeeded by Erich Ollenhauer in 1952. The Social Democrats won close to 30 per cent of the popular vote in the Federal Republic's first two elections. Although German Socialists are neither so closely linked with nor so strongly supported by trade unions as are British Laborites, the two parties have developed in similar fashion. The basic strength of the S.P.D. lies in its large paid membership of 640,000 persons.

Although the party, lacking outside popular support, has consistently occupied a minority position, it has a much larger political organization than the Christian Democratic Union, which boasts only 250,000 members. S.P.D.'s membership gives it a financial independence not possessed by the other parties, which have to rely on assistance from financially powerful groups. The S.P.D. is the only party which manages to meet most of its expenses from the proceeds of membership dues.¹⁸

Leaving Marxist dogma far behind, the German Socialists have come out for free economic development, business competition, and responsible private ownership. Although the party made relative gains in 1957, it then attracted the votes of only a small share of the five million young persons participating in a national election for the first time.

PLACE OF THE MODERATE FREE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The Free Democratic Party, third largest political group in West Germany, was reorganized in 1945 under the leadership of Theodor Heuss, who became the first President of the Federal Republic.¹⁹ Rejecting Socialist experimentation and state capitalism, the F.D.P. draws most of its strength from small business groups, managerial and professional ranks, intellectuals, and Protestants who are dissatisfied with Adenauer but cannot vote Socialist.

The Free Democrats won 12 per cent of the total vote in 1949 but only 7.7 per cent in 1957. The F.D.P. is potentially in a position of power out of all proportion to its limited numbers. If the Christian Democrats should lose

¹⁸ Fritz Rene Allemann, *Meet Germany* (1960), p. 20.

¹⁹ The F.D.P. is the inheritor of the great German liberal movement of 1848; its direct forebear was the German Democratic Party of the Weimar republic.

seats in the Bundestag, the Free Democrats presumably could exercise a balance of power between them and the Social Democrats.

Although the F.D.P. was a member of the government coalition from 1949 to early 1956, its members eventually accused the C.D.U. of "not living up to the true meaning of the word 'coalition'" and severed their ties with the dominant party. Since the 1957 election, the Free Democrats have supported West German membership in NATO but have taken a less rigid attitude than either of the two major parties toward German reunification, liberalization of international trade, and European political integration.

Though not far from the Socialists in foreign policy, the Free Democrats reject any alliance with them that would lead to further nationalization of industry. Erich Mende, who was elected chairman of the group of 44 Free Democrats in the Bundestag in January 1960, has made it clear that he will support Adenauer in the next Bundestag rather than attempt any coalition with the Socialists.

DECLINE IN THE STRENGTH OF EXTREMIST PARTIES

Left and right-wing marginal parties have steadily lost strength over the past decade. The German Communist Party,²⁰ the German Reich Party, the Bavarian Party, and the All-German Bloc have either been declared unconstitutional or have lost their following and merged with other parties. Bids by neo-Nazis and neutralists for representation have been overwhelmingly rejected by the voters.

The German Party is the largest of the minority groups; it won 17 seats in the 1957 election, thanks to substantial help from its C.D.U. ally. The party, which in 1957 merged with dissident members of the Free Democrats, derives most of its support from the farm population. It is the only German party which calls itself conservative. Despite its strong nationalist views, the German Party has unconditionally accepted Adenauer's foreign policy.

In this year's election, the German Party has decided to join forces with the Refugee Party, which polled 4.6 per cent of the 1957 vote, in hopes of maintaining its representation in the Bundestag. Adenauer believes that a clear-

²⁰ The German Communist Party, which once had the strongest organization in Europe and was cited by Lenin and others as the most ready to launch a revolution, polled only 59,000 votes in the 1957 election.

cut rightist party is a valuable asset in Germany's political system, but other C.D.U. members are no longer willing to prop up the German Party.

Despite determined efforts, the anti-democratic forces which undermined the Weimar republic have not succeeded in winning back a fraction of their influence in the Federal Republic. The "lunatic fringe" of political extremism is virtually non-existent in West Germany today. Even the strongly rightist Refugee Party, made up principally of escapees from Communist-controlled areas in the East, has lost its power as its members have found employment and housing and become integrated in the social structure of West Germany.

Leading Personalities in 1961 Campaign

THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN this year is centered, not on party positions or ideologies, but on the personalities of the leading candidates. Willy Brandt's 47 years, as opposed to Adenauer's 85, are thought by the S.P.D. to exert a favorable impression on the three million persons between the ages of 21 and 25 who will be voting for the first time. The most popular Socialist slogan at the moment is: "Move with the times." The party's first campaign pamphlet, entitled "Trust," showed Brandt and President Kennedy smiling confidently at each other on the cover.²¹

Many Socialists, however, fear that Brandt will prove less magnetic to the voters than they had expected. The mayor has been subjected to a smear campaign. Public attention has been focused on his illegitimate birth, on his changing his name from Herbert Karl Frahm, and on his wartime divorce. In addition, the C.D.U. has been playing on the fact that Brandt spent the worst years of Nazism abroad.²²

Brandt's active campaign against the Nazis has become a semi-clandestine issue of the campaign. Brandt became a member of the S.P.D. at the age of 17 and in 1933, under

²¹ "German Parties Prepare," *London Economist*, May 13, 1961, p. 662.

²² E. V. Kuehnelt-Leddihn, "Adenauer Looks Like a Winner," *National Review*, June 17, 1961, p. 382. Frahm was the family name of Brandt's mother.

the threat of arrest by the Gestapo, he left Germany for Norway. He showed in 1937 that he preferred adventure to safety by joining the Spanish Republicans, then fighting Franco's German-backed Loyalists in the civil war in Spain.

Back in Norway when that country was overwhelmed by the Germans in 1940, Brandt put on a Norwegian uniform and was taken prisoner of war, thus escaping detection as an anti-Nazi German. Released the same year, he fled to Sweden and was granted Norwegian citizenship by the Norwegian government-in-exile. After divorce from his first wife in 1944, Brandt married a Norwegian woman with whom he worked in the anti-Nazi underground in Sweden. Only after Hitler's downfall did Brandt return to Germany; he regained German citizenship in 1947.

Some Germans have suggested that Brandt's wartime anti-Nazi activity abroad may have amounted to treason. A German newspaper recently asked: "Did Willy Brandt really fight against German soldiers?" Minister of Defense Franz Joseph Strauss has said that anybody who worked against the Nazis, for whatever reason, must be considered a security risk.²³ The current campaign is consequently testing the sincerity of many Germans in repudiating the Hitler regime.²⁴

ADENAUER'S GREAT AGE AND THE PARTY SUCCESSION

A fourth electoral victory for Konrad Adenauer would make more urgent than ever the question of who is eventually to succeed *Der Alte*. The Chancellor, while still vigorous, takes progressively longer vacations in Italy, and he obviously cannot hold the reins indefinitely. The Socialists therefore are trying to represent the forthcoming election as a choice, not between Brandt and Adenauer, but between Brandt and some undesignated successor to Adenauer.

Although German voters are evidently concerned over the Chancellor's advanced age, the chances are that he will not indicate before the election whom he would favor to succeed him. Adenauer realizes that his authority cannot be passed on either by naming a political heir or by yielding his place. Only a politician of stature and strength could

²³ Flora Lewis, "A Tough Question Stirs Germany," *Washington Post*, Jan. 8, 1961, p. E 5.

²⁴ Adenauer, mayor of Cologne from 1917 until forced by the Nazis in 1933 to retire from politics because of his Catholic ties, stayed in Germany during the war. He was arrested by the Nazis following the attempt on Hitler's life in 1944.

effectively claim his legacy and there is none in sight at the moment.

Vice Chancellor and Minister of Economic Affairs Ludwig Erhard seems the most likely candidate for the succession. To the average German, Erhard is the man responsible for the country's unprecedented prosperity. While his domestic policy does not differ markedly from that of Adenauer, his foreign policy would be oriented toward political and economic unification of all of Western Europe, rather than of simply the six Common Market countries. However, Adenauer is known to dislike the idea of being succeeded by his Protestant Minister of Economic Affairs. He is said to think that the Vice Chancellor lacks the statesmanship necessary for the top government post.²⁵

Franz Joseph Strauss, the Minister of Defense, is perhaps the most capable figure on the political scene, but he is also the most controversial and is still suffering from a reputation for impetuosity. Strauss is youthful, energetic, ambitious, and has political flair, but his principal asset is likewise his source of greatest weakness: As leader of the Bavarian Christian Socialist Union, the most powerful regional political organization in Germany, he has a decided advantage over all other contenders for the chancellorship; but as a Bavarian, he is resented by a surprisingly large number of Germans who suspect the temperamental characteristics of the people of that region.²⁶ Only 4 per cent of C.D.U. voters responding to questions in a recent poll named the 45-year-old Defense Minister as their choice to succeed Adenauer. Erhard was the overwhelming favorite.

SQUABBLE OVER LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY IN 1959

In the course of the 12 years that Adenauer has been in office, he has made energetic use of the constitutional provision that the "Chancellor determines, and is responsible for, general policy." Under this type of "Chancellor's democracy," Adenauer has not only determined general policy but much of detailed policy as well. The power he wields is so great that the government has often been

²⁵ H. G. Alexander, "Germany Before the Elections," *Political Quarterly*, April-June 1961, p. 174.

²⁶ Opponents of Strauss are also irate over his desire to arm the Bundeswehr with atomic weapons. Strauss has favored stepping up the size of the army in a country where militarism is now regarded with great suspicion.—George Bailey, "A New Army for the New Germany," *The Reporter*, July 20, 1961, p. 21.

almost paralyzed when illness or holidays have prevented him from making prompt decisions.

Now regarded as the George Washington of the Federal Republic, Adenauer has become so accustomed to the exercise of power that there have been conspicuous lapses in democratic practice.²⁷ Vested interests are said increasingly to by-pass both ministers and Bundestag to arrange their affairs through direct contacts with the Chancellor. Cited as an example was an attempt last year to start a second television network over the heads of the *Laender*—an attempt that was foiled by court intervention.

Critics have been charging for years that Adenauer's wide-ranging exercise of executive power has stunted the growth of the Legislative Branch of the Federal Republic. The Chancellor's tendency to make wholly personal decisions, which frequently reverse policies set by his own ministers, has caused divisions within the Christian Democratic Union on economic policy and other matters.

Adenauer's change of heart about standing for the presidency of the republic two years ago weakened the C.D.U. for the time being. To the surprise of the cabinet and of the entire German people, the Chancellor had stated his readiness on April 7, 1959, to run for the office of Federal President.²⁸ His decision was received favorably, but soon thereafter members of his party in the Bundestag split into two factions on choice of a new Chancellor. The majority favored Erhard, but a substantial minority supported Franz Etzel, the Minister of Finance, who was favored by Adenauer. Meanwhile, *Der Alte* made it clear in a television address that he would expect, as President, to continue to exert some influence over the conduct of German foreign policy.

When the Bundestag majority affirmed its intention to support Erhard, the country was shocked to hear Adenauer announce, June 4, 1959, that he had reconsidered and had decided to retain the office of Chancellor. Adenauer was then accused of high-handedness and disrespect for democratic procedures, of "devaluating" the political prestige of his close colleagues, and of undermining the moral au-

²⁷ Alfred L. Malabre, "Germany's Election," *Wall Street Journal*, July 26, 1961, p. 1.

²⁸ Heuss was ineligible for re-election because of the constitutional bar to a third consecutive term.

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thority of the presidency. Erhard, who had earlier been picked by Adenauer to run for the presidency but who had rejected the effort to "push him upstairs," said in a letter to the Chancellor:

The impression has been created in wide circles that you alone can guarantee the necessary continuity of German policy. . . . This struggle is about neither you nor me but about the problem of securing the future of the German people . . . in alliance with the free world. . . . I am not just your Economics Minister: I am responsible as well to the party and to the nation.

One of the great deficiencies of postwar West Germany's political development has been the failure to groom new leaders. Adenauer has never been able to tolerate men in his cabinet who have shown independence and determination, except in fields of little interest to him. In effect, no one has been allowed to gain the experience in problems of foreign policy and political leadership that is essential to successful occupancy of the office of Chancellor.

THREATS TO PARTY STABILITY; GERMAN REUNIFICATION

Adenauer, speaking in Bonn last March 9, took credit on behalf of the C.D.U. for the stability of West German politics over the past decade. He said then that if his party had not been in power for the past 12 years, the Federal Republic "long since would have lost its freedom." He attributed the country's rapid recovery from the war and its present booming economy to the C.D.U.'s recognition of the necessity of close German cooperation with other Western nations.

Once Adenauer abandons the helm, the government is likely to reflect, not the will of a single individual, but that of a collective leadership. Brandt has promised that if he is elected Chancellor, he will turn for counsel to the country's best minds regardless of party affiliation. Brandt has said that "Nobody on this earth is capable of governing a nation solely by the method of solitary decisions."²⁹ However, a number of Western statesmen, as well as German politicians of all parties, are worried over what will happen to the firm political structure of the Federal Republic when Adenauer steps down. Without his leadership, the country's widely divergent religious, economic and other groups may become more fluid, to the country's detriment.

A question that looms large in the background of German

²⁹ "German Parties Prepare," *The Economist*, May 13, 1961, p. 662.

politics is that of reunification of the divided country. Western diplomats are aware that no West German government, whatever its composition, could afford to overlook a bona fide opportunity to effect reunification. While Adenauer and his lieutenants are as firmly committed as the leaders of other Western nations to German reunification by means of free elections, there is doubt that all Germans would hold out as patiently for Communist agreement to put that formula to the test.³⁰ Brandt warned at Bonn on March 20: "There is reason to fear that there may be incalculable developments if it is not possible to obtain self-determination for our fellow-countrymen under Communist rule. To believe that a permanent peace can be achieved without reunification is bound to prove an illusion."

More than 13 million of the 55 million West Germans are refugees from East Germany or from the lost territories east of the Oder-Neisse line, and nearly one-third of the Federal Republic's people have relatives in East Germany. Many Christian Democrats fear that if the Social Democrats are again defeated by a large margin, the result may be a Socialist split with strong emphasis on reunification in the left wing of the divided party.³¹

³⁰ See "Berlin Crisis and German Reunification," *E.R.R.* 1958 Vol. II, pp. 969-972.

³¹ H. G. Alexander, "Germany Before the Elections," *Political Quarterly*, April-June 1961, p. 178.







